

REMARKS

1. Claims 1, 7, 13 and 19 have been amended in the present response. Claims 1-24 remain in the case.

Generally, the present invention is directed to a hybrid multimedia conferencing system in which an audio portion (e.g., voice communications) of a multimedia conference is established and maintained over the PSTN and, for users capable of accommodating multi-media content, "extra-audio" connections are negotiated and established over an IP network connected to the PSTN. The extra-audio portion supplements but does not replace the audio portion. In such manner, all terminals (e.g., including extra-audio capable multimedia terminals as well as standard POTS telephones) participate in the audio portion; and thereafter, multimedia terminals exchange IP addresses and negotiate extra-audio capabilities to begin an extra-audio portion. One of the advantages features of this approach (i.e., establishing an extra-audio portion some time after the audio portion is established and maintained) is that it provides for exchanging IP addresses over the PSTN, rather than via the IP network as in the prior art, thereby enhancing security.

Claims 1, 7, 13 and 19 have been amended to more clearly recite the features of establishing an extra-audio portion some time after the audio portion is established and maintained; and the extra-audio portion is conducted over the IP network while the audio portion is maintained over the IP network and switched circuit network.

2. Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Dalal et al (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0014488). Claim 1 has been amended. To the extent the rejection is still maintained against amended claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-5, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Dalal reference is concerned with enhancing the Microsoft Real-time Communications Client (MS RTC) platform and similar platforms, which use default point-to-point connections between two endpoints, to allow for multi-party conferences. Call sessions are established as VoIP calls (i.e., via IP network) between IP endpoints having registered their IP address and port number in the system. A standard telephone (i.e., connected to the PSTN) may

also be invited to the conference; and in such case, a PSTN proxy and gateway is utilized to extend the VoIP call to the PSTN. It is noted, however, to the extent Dalal describes a PSTN audio link, such link is established, if at all, after an IP host exchanges IP addresses and establishes an IP link with the PSTN proxy; and the PSTN audio link is never used between IP hosts, which instead communicate via the IP network. Indeed, the PSTN link is not even established in the case where the call does not include a standard telephone. Moreover, in the Dalal reference, IP addresses are exchanged over the IP network, not the PSTN, and not some time after establishing a PSTN audio link, which is not surprising given that the PSTN audio link will not exist in many call scenarios. Thus, Dalal does not describe a multimedia user station participating in an audio portion of the call over the PSTN, neither does it describe exchanging its IP address over the PSTN sometime after establishing an audio link, negotiating extra-audio capabilities or establishing an extra-audio portion over the IP network.

Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, amended claim 1 is believed to distinguish over Dalal and to be in condition for allowance. Claims 2-5 distinguish over Dalal for at least the reason of their dependence on amended claim 1.

3. Claims 7-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Vaziri et al (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0022235). Claims 7, 13 and 19 have been amended. To the extent the rejection is still maintained against amended claims 7, 13 and 19 and their dependent claims 8-12, 14-18 and 20-24, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Vaziri reference describes a system and method for using an Internet switch box to switchover from a PSTN call to an Internet telephony (e.g., VoIP) call. Call sessions are initially established as PSTN calls; and if the users so desire, they may signal their Internet switch boxes to switch over to an Internet telephony call. Alternatively, the users can prearrange to call each other solely by Internet telephony, thereby bypassing the need to call each other over the PSTN. It is noted, however, in either case, communications occur over either the PSTN, or the Internet, never both the PSTN and the Internet. Thus, there is no teaching or suggestion of an audio portion of a call conducted over the PSTN while an extra-audio portion of the call is conducted over an IP network. Neither does Vaziri teach exchanging IP addresses over the PSTN. Rather,

Vaziri exchanges IP addresses only in the Internet telephony domain, after the PSTN connection is disconnected.

Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, amended claims 7, 13 and 19 are believed to distinguish over Vaziri and to be in condition for allowance. Claims 8-12, 14-18 and 20-24 distinguish over Vaziria for at least the reason of their dependence on amended claims 7, 13 and 19.

4. Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dalal et al in view of Vaziri et al. Claim 6 depends from amended claim 1. To the extent the rejection of claim 6 is still maintained in view of the present claim amendments, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As noted above, Dalal does not describe a multimedia user station participating in an audio portion of the call over the PSTN, neither does it describe exchanging its IP address over the PSTN sometime after establishing an audio link, negotiating extra-audio capabilities or establishing an extra-audio portion over the IP network, as recited in claim 1. Similarly, Vaziri does not describe exchanging IP addresses over the PSTN or conducting an audio portion of a call over the PSTN while an extra-audio portion of the call is conducted over an IP network.

Accordingly, even if Dalal and Vaziri were combined, the combination does not teach or suggest the limitations of amended base claim 1. Thus, claim 6 distinguishes over Dalal and Vaziri for at least the reason of its dependence on amended claim 1.

5. In view of the above amendments and remarks, a notice of allowance of claims 1-24 is respectfully requested. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Lucent Technologies Deposit Account No. 12-2325.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: May 17, 2005

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